

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7284

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB EFIN ETRAN IS

SUBJ: SEAMAN STRIKE IN PROTEST AGAINST TAX REFORM

1. FIRST MAJOR SALVO AIMED AGAINST IMPLEMENTATION OF BEN SHAHAR INCOME TAX REFORM FIRED JUNE 24 WHEN A SECRETARY OF SEAMENS UNION ISSUED STRIKE ORDERS TO ALL ISRAELI MERCHANT SEAMEN IN ISRAELI AND FOREIGN PORTS.

2. STRIKE ORDER ISSUED BY MOSHE LEVY, ONE OF THREE SECRETARIES AT SEAMEN'S UNION, IN DEFIANCE OF TWO OTHER UNION SECRETARIES AND THE HISTADRUT TRADE UNION DEPARTMENT. LATTER, IN SPECIAL MEETING JUNE 25, WITHDREW RECOGNITION OF LEVY AS UNION SECRETARY AND ORDERED SEAMEN TO CONTINUE NORMAL WORK.

3. ACCORDING PRESS REPORTS OF JUNE 26, SOME BUT NOT ALL ISRAELI SHIPS IN THREE PORTS IN ISRAEL AND SEVERAL FOREIGN PORTS ARE OBSERVING STRIKE. HOWEVER REPORTERS NOTE GENERAL CONFUSION ON EXTENT TO WHICH ILLEGAL STRIKE ORDER IS BEING FOLLOWED. IMPACT OF STRIKE LESSENED BY FACT RELATIVELY FEW SHIPS ARE NOW IN PORT. SHIPPING COMPANIES COMPLAIN THEY HAVE FACED EIGHT STRIKES IN PAST TEN MONTHS, ALL WITHOUT WARNING AND ALL LACKING HISTADRUT APPROVAL.

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4. STRIKE WAS AIMED AGAINST BEN SHAHAR TAX REFORM PROPOSALS NOW BEFORE KNESSET, WHICH INTER-ALIA, WILL ELIMINATE SPECIAL TAX CONCESSIONS TO SEAMEN

AS WELL AS AIRLINE CREWS ON PORTION OF SALARY RECEIVED
IN FOREIGN CURRENCY. (ONE VERY SENIOR EL AL PILOT REPORTEDLY
SAID HE WOULD HAVE TO EARN IL 99,700 GROSS PER
MONTH IN ORDER TO NET SAME TAKE HOME PAY HE NOW
RECEIVES IF BEN SHAHAR PROPOSALS NOT MODIFIED.)

5. MEANWHILE FINAMIN HAS INSISTED NEW TAX REFORM GO
ONTO EFFECT JULY 1, DESPITE PROTEST OF SEAMEN AND
OTHER GROUPS WHICH HAVE APPEALED TO HIM FOR CHANGES
IN PROPOSED LAW.

6. COMMENT: GOVERNMENT AND HISTADRUT WILL OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO
DEAL FIRMLY WITH SEAMEN'S STRIKE TO PREVENT EROSION TAX
REFORM BEFORE IT HAS EVEN BEGUN.
VELIOTES

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